THE CHALLENGES FACED BY LATINO UNDOCUMENTED SCHOLARS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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by

Elden O. Hernandez Hernandez

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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY LATINO UNDOCUMENTED SCHOLARS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Elden O. Hernandez Hernandez

The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges facing undocumented Latino scholars, as well as the challenges faced by scholars with mixed-status parents. The researcher will specifically be looking into institutional and systemic challenges faced by undocumented Latino students and the children of undocumented parents. The researcher will identify and survey undocumented college students and students whose parents are undocumented to assess their perspectives on the challenges they face and how they have dealt with those challenges. Research on the topic of the challenges face by the undocumented population in their pursuit of higher education is mounting including Baum and Flores’ (2011). In their research, they reported that there are several institutional and systemic factors that impact the educational attainment of undocumented Latino students. Some of these factors are “inadequate
information about college opportunities and how to access them, cultural differences, citizenship issues, language barriers, and, too frequently, discrimination” (p. 172).

**Conclusions Reached**

This study’s findings suggest that undocumented individuals still face multiple systemic and institutional challenges in their pursuit of higher education. Study participants stated that there is a need for culturally competent and sensitive institutional agents to help them navigate the rather complex system of higher education in the United States that gets even more complex as it intercepts with issues of bilingualism, culture and immigration status. The study also suggested that family and peers play a key role in the persistence exhibited by undocumented students.

_______________________, Committee Chair
Mimi Coughlin, Ph.D.

_______________________
Date
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my master’s and this thesis to my parents Angelico and Virginia Hernandez who laid the foundation for me to build on. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of education, for supporting me throughout my educational career, and for giving me hope of a better future. I would also like to dedicate my educational achievements to my brothers and sisters who were not fortunate enough to continue their formal education. This master’s is also dedicated to my nieces and nephews as proof that you’re also able to earn a college degree. The final dedication goes to my sister Yolanda Perez that even though I do not know you, I love you with all my heart and I know one day I’ll be able to show you this dedication page as proof that you have always been in my life.

Quisiera dedicar mi magister y mi tesis a mis padres Angelico y Virginia Hernández quienes construyeron la base para que yo continuara. Gracias por fomentar en mi la importancia de la educación, por apoyarme en toda mi carrera educacional, y por darme la esperanza de un mejor futuro. Al igual quisiera dedicar mis logros educacionales a mis hermanos y hermanas quien desafortunadamente no pudieron continuar su educación formal. Este magister también esta dedicado a mis sobrinas y sobrinos como prueba de que ustedes también pueden obtener un título universitario. La dedicación final es para mi hermana Yolanda Pérez que aunque no te conozco, te quiero con todo mi corazón y sé que algún día te podré enseñar esta página de dedicación como prueba de que siempre has estado en mi vida.
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

According to the Pew Research Center, there are 11.1 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States (2013), 76% of this population are Hispanics (Passel & Cohn, 2009), and 19% of the overall undocumented population migrated to the United States as children (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). The children of undocumented individuals in the United States “make up 7 percent of elementary and secondary school students in the United States” (Baum & Flores, 2011, p. 172); therefore, in order to fill the high demand for skills and education in the U.S. labor market the institutional and systemic challenges faced by undocumented students and children of undocumented families to attain a college education must be addressed. According to Passel and Cohn, less than 50% of undocumented students who graduated from high school are in college or have at some point attended college; this is a very low number compared to 71% of the U.S.-born population (2009). Unfortunately, data regarding the percentage of undocumented scholars who earned a postsecondary degree is not yet available; however, the data available suggests that there are different challenges that are getting in the way of more undocumented immigrants to continue their studies.

The challenges that unauthorized immigrants face in order to pursue a postsecondary education and the repercussions the lack of a postsecondary education may bring may not only affect unauthorized immigrants but also U.S. citizens. “The
number of U.S.-born children in mixed status families (unauthorized immigrant parents and citizen children) has expanded rapidly in recent years, to 4 million in 2008 from 2.7 million in 2003” (Passel & Cohn, 2009).

Addressing the needs and challenges of undocumented scholars and those of the children of undocumented immigrants should be a priority for the State of California. According to Passel and Cohn, the State of California houses the largest number of unauthorized immigrants accounting for 2.7 million of the state’s population, and they account for 10% the state’s labor force (2009).

Moreover, there are 450 degree-seeking “nonresident aliens” at CSU, Sacramento (California State University, Sacramento: Office of Institutional Research, 2014) that continue to face these institutional and systemic challenges in their pursuit of higher education. The research provided by this study may allow educators and policy makers to analyze their initiatives and practices, so as to create more inclusive practices that address the specific needs of the Latino undocumented population.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

This study examines the systemic and institutional challenges faced by undocumented scholars in their pursuit of higher education. This study will discuss the importance of identifying and addressing the challenges and/or barriers undocumented scholars face as they navigate the higher education system. The data collected will illustrate the ways in which these systemic and institutional challenges have hindered undocumented Latino scholars’ opportunities of obtaining a college degree. Furthermore, the study will document how Latino undocumented scholars
have dealt with the challenges posed by institutions of higher learning and their inadequate policies. Lastly, this paper will explore the factors that hinder or propel Latino undocumented scholars’ ability not only to attend an institution of higher learning, but actually earn a degree.

The research specifically aims to address the following questions:

1. What are some of the challenges undocumented students face in their pursuit of higher education?
2. What are some of the challenges children of undocumented parents face in their pursuit of higher education?
3. What initiatives/practices can be put in place to eliminate these challenges?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the challenges undocumented Latino scholars, as well as the challenges faced by scholars with mixed-status parents. The researcher will specifically be looking into institutional and systemic challenges faced by undocumented Latino students and the children of undocumented parents. The researcher will identify and survey undocumented college students and students whose parents are undocumented to assess their perspectives on the challenges they face and how they have dealt with those challenges. Research on the topic of the challenges face by the undocumented population in their pursuit of higher education is mounting including Baum and Flores (2011). In their research, they reported that there are several institutional and systemic factors that impact the educational attainment of undocumented Latino students. Some of these factors are “inadequate information
about college opportunities and how to access them, cultural differences, citizenship issues, language barriers, and, too frequently, discrimination” (p. 172).

**Theoretical Framework**

The researcher uses the Critical Research Theory (CRT) and the Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) to look at the challenges Latino undocumented scholars face in their pursuit of higher education. CRT and LatCrit are theoretical frameworks based on legal studies that help us recognize patterns of discrimination and take steps to remove the challenge they pose to the success of Latinos in their pursuit of higher education (Villalpando & Ortiz, 2004). Both theories have similar backgrounds, but LatCrit explores issues that are specific to the Latino community, such as immigration, language, culture and identity; these issues illustrate the opportunity gap Latinos face when compare to Caucasians. CRT argues that our legal system and institutional policies are part of illegitimate hierarchies that yield to white supremacy and privilege, which in part lead to inequities. “CRT and LatCrit provide the lens through which student services professionals can contest the premises that inform the development of programs, policies, and practices designed to enhance the educational experiences of Latinos” (Villalpando & Ortiz, 2004, p. 45).

**Definition of Terms**

AB540: A California State bill that allows students who have resided for at least three years and/or graduated (or obtained the equivalent) from high school in California to pay in-state tuition at any UC, CSU or community college in California.
DACA: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is an immigration policy enacted by President Obama that allows undocumented scholars who entered the country before their 16th birthday and have continuously resided in the United States prior to June 15, 2007 to apply for a two-year renewable work permit and exemption from deportation.

Dream Center: An on-campus resource center for undocumented students.

Hispanic: “People who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic or Latino Categories listed on the Census 2010 questionnaire—‘Mexican,’ ‘Puerto Rican,’ or Cuban—as well as those who indicate that they are ‘another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.’ People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are ‘another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin’ are those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic.”

Latino: An individual of Latin American origin.

Mixed-status families: Families whose members have different citizenship and immigration statuses. More often used to refer to families whose children are U.S. citizens and the parents are undocumented.

**Assumptions**

It will be assumed that all survey participants will be answering to the best of their knowledge and without any fears of repercussion given their immigration status, and that all survey participants have faced challenges/uncertainties in their pursuit of higher education as a consequence of their immigration status.

**Justification**

It is important to study and address the challenges faced by Latino undocumented scholars because this is a large community and fast growing population in the United States and the lack of action on this topic could yield problematic to society. It is important for scholars, especially in California, to acknowledge the importance to breach the opportunity gap amongst the Latino undocumented community. This community has long been neglected and as a consequence the educational system has replicated itself yielding to inequities. It is important for these inequities to be acknowledged and addressed; so that future generations of U.S. Citizens of Latino-undocumented descent have an equitable chance at succeeding in the professional field.

**Limitations**

This study is limited to the amount of relevant literature available and the survey’s participants’ truthfulness. Moreover, the researcher will use a small sample which is not representative of the Latino undocumented population in Northern California, and it may be disproportionate in the representation of other Latino groups that are not of Mexican descent. However, the sample size is large enough to provide the researcher an in-depth understanding of the participants’ challenges in their pursuit
of higher education, and that is the ultimate purpose of qualitative research (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997).

**Organization of the Chapters**

This study is organized into five chapters. This chapter, Chapter 1, provides background information on the issue at hand and presents claims on why it is important to study it. The following chapter will be a review of the most relevant literature pertaining to the challenges experienced by undocumented Latino scholars and the key factors that propel them to further their education despite the multiple obstacles they face. Chapter 3 provides the reader with the research, data collection and analysis methods employed by the researcher to conduct the study. Chapter 4 will provide a breakdown of the participants of the study, analyzed the data and discuss common themes. Lastly, Chapter 5 will provide the reader with a summary of the study along with conclusions, recommendations and implication for further research.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review will focus on the actual and perceived institutional and systemic challenges Latino scholars face in their pursuit of higher education, as well as the factors that motivate this group of students to persist even against adversity.

Each year, millions of students graduate from high school in the United States and included in those million are 65,000 undocumented youth (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). However, unlike their documented counterparts, only 5-10% of them will “continue their education and enroll in an institution of higher education, and far fewer [will] successfully graduate with a degree” (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). According to Conger and Chellman, due to their “lower likelihood of obtaining financial support from state, federal, and private sources and their need to work while attending school, undocumented youth are far less likely than the other three groups of students to enroll in their degree programs full-time” (2013, p. 365). The multiple and unique challenges undocumented youth face in their daily lives often times trunks their educational aspirations (Teranishi et al., 2015). Undocumented scholars often have to deal with the stigma and challenges associated with having a “triple minority status”: ethnicity, immigration status and socioeconomic status (Perez, Cortes, Ramos, & Coronado, 2010).

This study seeks to inform the general public and educational leaders of the unique challenges the Latino undocumented youth face in their pursuit of higher
education in the United States. This study also seeks to cast a light upon initiatives and practices that are allowing more and more undocumented youth to not only enroll at institutions of higher learning but graduate from those institutions. The undocumented youth population has historically sat at the center of the immigration debate dating back as far as 1982 with Plyer v. Doe that gain this population access to a free k-12 education to President Obama’s executive action commonly known as DACA in 2014. Even though discussion around this specific faction of the population is ample, there are not a lot of large-scale analyses of this population’s achievements while in school (Conger & Chellman, 2013).

This is mainly due to the fact that the undocumented youth is a hidden population (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997) and therefore difficult to identify. Currently, there is no federal policy that provides undocumented youth with a clear path to permanent residency and later to citizenship, it is up to the States to enact legislation that either allows or bans undocumented youth from their institutions of higher learning (Conger & Chellman, 2013).

While some undocumented Latino scholars manage to navigate the educational system in the United States and obtain their degrees the future is still uncertain for most of them. This population does not only face the current broken immigration system, but also the stigma attached to their status and some of the benefits that come with being a lawful resident of the United States such as driving and well-paid jobs.

This chapter will cover an in-depth study of the literature on the following 14 sub-areas: Undocumented Population in the United States, Economic and Social

Undocumented Population in the United States

According to the Pew Research Center, there are 11.1 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States (2013); accounting for 3.7% of the United States population (Passel & Cohn, 2010). 76% of this population are Hispanics (Passel & Cohn, 2009), and 19% of the overall undocumented population migrated to the United States as children (Batalova & McHugh, 2010). This faction of the undocumented population is known by scholars as generation 1.5 since in contrast with the previous generation, they experienced most of the formative years in a new country, but where not born in it like those in the second generation (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). Children are one-sixth of the undocumented population (Flores, 2010), and the children of undocumented individuals in the United States account for 4.5 million of the United States population (Passel & Cohn, 2010), and “make up 7 percent of elementary and secondary school students in the United States” (Baum & Flores, 2011, p. 172).

“The number of U.S.-born children in mixed status families (unauthorized immigrant parents and citizen children) has expanded rapidly in recent years, to 4 million in 2008 from 2.7 million in 2003” (Passel & Cohn, 2009, p. 2). The state of California houses the largest number of unauthorized immigrants accounting for 2.7
million of the state’s population, and they account for 10% the state’s labor force (Passel & Cohn, 2009), followed by Nevada with 2.6 million, Texas with 1.6 million, Florida with 825,000 and New York with 625,000 (Passel & Cohn, 2010). The undocumented population account for 5.2% of the nation’s labor force with the majority of it concentrating in California where 1.85 million undocumented individuals work. Texas is the second state with the largest number of undocumented workers with 1.1 million, followed by Florida with 600,000 and New York with 450,000 (Passel & Cohn, 2010).

**Economic and Social Mobility**

The debate on whether undocumented students and even U.S. born children born to undocumented parents should have access to the free U.S. public education system is not new. In fact, it dates back to 1975 when the Texas state legislature authorized school districts to deny enrollment to children who have not been legally admitted into the United States (Gonzales, Heredia, & Negrón-Gonzales, 2015). If parents wanted to send their undocumented children to a state primary and/or secondary school, they would have to pay tuition (Flores, 2010). It was not until the *Plyer v. Doe* historical case when the US Supreme Court ruled that states could not discriminate against students based on their immigration status (1982) and prohibited state primary and secondary schools from requiring legal residency to enroll children free of charge. In the U.S. Supreme Court decision, Justice William Brennan stated that denying a primary and secondary education to undocumented children would create a permanent inferior faction of society (*Plyer v. Doe*, 1982). However, this
historical ruling did not grant undocumented scholars free access to higher education, thus creating a cap to the social and economic mobility undocumented scholars. This cap defeats the fundamental purpose of Plyer v. Doe and it limits undocumented scholars’ ability to pursue a higher education and obtain a high-paying job. “Research indicates that given the opportunity to regularize their status, undocumented immigrants experience substantial upward mobility” (Gonzales, 2009). Unfortunately, 47% of undocumented immigrants between the ages of 25 to 64 have less than a high school education (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Research suggests that higher levels of education yield to better-remunerated jobs (Haskins, 2008), and undocumented scholars are often unable to pursue higher education given their legal status and as a consequence their earning potential is limited (Gonzales, 2009). According to Passel and Cohn, in 2007 the median household income of undocumented individuals was $36,000 compared to $50,000 for U.S.-born households (2009). Passel and Cohn also found that “undocumented immigrants do not attain markedly higher incomes the longer they live in the United States” (p. 4) This may prevent undocumented individuals themselves and their U.S.-born children to move up in the economical ladder; thus, restricting the economic mobility and quality of life of future generations.

**DACA and Ability to Work**

In 2012, President Barack Obama enacted the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, allowing undocumented scholars who entered the country before their 16th birthday and have continuously resided in the United States prior to June 15, 2007 to apply for a two-year renewable work permit and exemption from deportation.
According to Passel and Lopez (as cited in Conger & Chellman, 2013) an estimated 1.7 million youth who migrated with their parents to the United States before the age of 16 may be eligible for this program. The Migration Policy Institutes estimate that as of March 2016, 1.6 million youth of Hispanic origin are immediately eligible to apply for DACA; however, only 1 million have filed an application for DACA consideration. As of March 2016, the United States Citizen and Immigration Services has received 230,946 applications from Sacramento County for DACA. Most of the DACA applicants in this region are of Mexican origin with 439,000 applicants, followed by Guatemalans with 28,000 and 17,000 Koreans, the other large non-Hispanic group in Sacramento is from the Philippines with 10,000 applicants (Bachmeier & Hammar, 2016). This temporary work permit now allows undocumented scholars or as often referred to as DACAmented scholars to work legally in the United States. The ability to work legally in the United States has allowed many DACAmented scholars to work legally, to afford tuition fees and return to school; however, DACAmented scholars are still ineligible for federal financial aid. There are a small number of scholarships that do not require legal status, but these often come from private colleges, which in turn have higher tuition costs and fees than public universities thus making them unaffordable to undocumented scholars (Gonzales, 2009). Even though DACA has brought some benefits to generation 1.5 undocumented scholars, there is a lot of work to be done since “a great majority of policies determining the treatment of undocumented students in college settings are made at the state, higher education system, and institution levels” (Teranishi et al.,
2015, p. 1); most of these policies have to do with college enrollment and tuition equity.

**Tuition Equity Policies**

Even though “States subsidize the college education of residents by charging a tuition that is lower than the actual cost” (Kaushal, 2008, p. 771), college cost is often one of the biggest concerns for students especially those who are not consider state residents for tuition purposes. The issue of tuition equity policies is very complex and it affects a lot of students including U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Determining when a student can claim state residency for tuition purposes can be challenging for institutional agents in charge of that task, since there are different factors that may affect if a student can claim state residency. These factors range from holidays and vacations in which the student was not present in the state to when the student enrolls into college (Olivas, 2004). This issue is even more complex for students who are undocumented and the high cost of tuition poses one of the greatest challenges to undocumented scholars since this population is not eligible for Title IV Federal financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Moreover, most states charge out-of-state tuition to undocumented scholars. Section 505 of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) states:

an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a state (or political subdivision) for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit (in no less an amount,
duration, and scope) without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident.

This section allows states to charge undocumented scholars out-of-state tuition, which amounts to 140 percent more than resident fees (Gonzales, 2009). Per IIRIRA, policies regarding the admission, financial aid and tuition cost are left to for states, higher education systems and even institutions to decide (Teranishi et al., 2015).

Ironically, the first state to pass a tuition equity law was Texas, which was the same state that sought to charge tuition for a primary and secondary education to undocumented children (Flores, 2010). Nowadays, there are at least 18 states that allow undocumented scholars and lawful residents of the United States to pay in-state tuition if they meet certain qualifications (Undocumented Student Tuition: Overview. 2015). It is important to acknowledge that tuition equity policies are not exclusive for undocumented students; however, this group of students is likely to be the one who benefits from them (Flores, 2010). For instance, California enacted the AB 540, which allows undocumented and lawful residents of the United States to pay in-state tuition in California’s colleges and universities if they attended high school in California for three years and/or have graduated from a high school in California or obtained the equivalent, and for undocumented scholars the AB 540 law requires beneficiaries to file an affidavit stating their intend to apply for legal residency as soon as they become eligible (Assem. Bill 540, 2001). There are an estimated 605 AB 540 students enrolled in the University of California system, 3, 600 at the California State University system and 34, 000 at the California Community Colleges (SB 1460,
Bills like California’s AB 540 are permissible under federal law since they allow undocumented scholars to qualify for in-state tuition based on school attendance rather than immigration status and this benefit is also available for U.S. citizens (Gonzales, 2009). It is important to note that section 505 of IIRIRA does not mandate all states to charge out-of-state tuition to individuals, including but not limited to undocumented scholars, who meet certain criteria, but instead allows for individual states to draft their own policy to determine what constitutes a resident for tuition purposes. Not all state tuition equity policies have the same residency requirements and the educational attainment required to be eligible for these tuition equity policies also vary from state to state. Some states even require that the student seeking in-state tuition benefits enrolls at an institution of higher learning within certain timeframe from having completed high school or the equivalent (Flores, 2010).

Contrary to popular belief, the states that allow undocumented scholars to pay in-state tuition have not experience a large influx of new immigrant students who have displaced native-born students or added financial burdens to the states’ education system; yet, these states have experience an increased in revenue from tuition fees from students who otherwise would not be in college (Gonzales, 2009). Nevertheless, the cost of tuition is still a major challenge faced by undocumented students who are not eligible for financial aid in most states and at the federal level (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010).
Lack of Financial Assistance

For Latino students, regardless of their immigration status, the cost of a college education is a key factor when deciding to continue their education after high school and/or deciding what school to attend since most come from low-income households (Flores, 2010). This is especially true for those students without a legal status in the United States. According to Kaushal (2008), undocumented youth come from predominantly low-income families that have little ability to fund their children’s college education (p. 772); thus, creating a barrier for this population for the attainment of college degrees. Furthermore, low-income parents lack financial security that makes them less likely to take on loans to finance their child’s college education (Erisman & Looney, 2007). Per Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, undocumented scholars are not eligible for any type of financial assistance including but not limited to postsecondary education; however, it does not prohibit postsecondary education institutions from admitting and enrolling undocumented students. An important distinction to note in this act is that PRWORA does not prohibit states from providing state financial assistance to undocumented scholars. As a result, five states allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This distinction is key to California’s Dream Act, which allows AB540 students to access state grants. Under Assembly Bills 130 and 131, commonly known as the California Dream Act of 2011, undocumented scholars who meet the criteria set forth by California’s Assembly Bill 540 and can demonstrate financial need are eligible for state grants and
institutional grants. The authors of the California Dream Act argue that allowing undocumented students access to institutional grants does not affect the State’s budget since it just changes the way in which funds are distributed amongst students in need of financial aid (SB 160, 2010). Similarly, Washington State has the REAL Hope Act that enables qualified undocumented students to access state-funded financial aid. Other states that allow undocumented scholars to access state-funded financial aid for undergraduate students are New Mexico, Texas, and Minnesota. Other states, such as Delaware and Oklahoma allow undocumented scholars who meet certain criteria to access some types of financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

However, access to institutional aid is not guaranteed by federal law and therefore it varies from institution to institution since individual institutions are charged with determining whether or not undocumented students will have access to institutional scholarships (Neinhusser, Vega, & Carquin, 2016). The lack of federal policy regarding financial assistance for undocumented scholars, leaves institutional agents to deliver ‘unintentional’ microagressions to this population, which often results in hurting the students’ emotional well-being (Neinhusser et al., 2016).

**Psychological Challenges**

The act of immigrating to a new country creates stress all by itself, and some people immigrate to the United States escaping from wars, persecution, etc. Often times immigrants arrive to the United States without their whole family and lacking support mechanisms that may help them cope to their new surroundings (Erisman & Looney, 2007). These high levels of stress and anxiety are not only experienced by
adults, but also by youth and children alike. Research suggests that undocumented youth often experience high levels of stress due to their immigration status. One of the most significant stressors reported by this population is the fear of being deported or that a family member is deported; this constant fear often results in symptoms of depression and anxiety (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). This constant fear comes intensifies as the number of removals “have more than doubled over the past decade, reaching almost 400, 000 in fiscal 2009” (Passel & Cohn, 2010, p. 10).

Furthermore, the lives of undocumented youth are fraught mixed-feelings of acceptance and rejection. While growing up children are told that hard work pays off, but often times undocumented scholars regardless of the arduous work and effort they put into succeeding fall short from achieving their dreams due to their immigration status; thus, often times leaving them with a vulnerable state of mind (Takeuchi et al., 2013). In some cases, undocumented youth experience stress, anxiety and depression from their inability to participate in the rites of passage from adolescence to adulthood (Takeuchi et al., 2013). Moreover, the discourse surrounding undocumented immigrants both in the media and in the political arena may lead undocumented youth to internalize the term ‘illegal’, which is often used by politicians and the media to describe them, and this often leads youth with feelings of fear, anxiety and rejection from the rest of society (Takeuchi et al., 2013). The internalization of this term and the negative portrayal of this faction of society by the media often have a negative impact on undocumented youth’s identity development (Perez et al., 2010).

Therefore, undocumented youth need services to help them deal with the mixed-
feelings they are experiencing, but often times because those in charge of providing these services also fulfill immigration roles, undocumented youth do not seek these services (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010).

According to Gonzales and Chavez (2012), the concept of objectivity can be linked to the feelings of not being wanted experience by generation 1.5 and even by US-born youth to undocumented parents. This feeling of rejection is also experience by some U.S.-born children since often times they are labeled as ‘anchor babies’ referencing that their undocumented parents had them as a mean to legalize their immigration status in the United States. Some undocumented scholars opt not to continue their education because they do not want to expose themselves or their families by revealing their immigration status to institutions of higher learning where their presence might not even be welcomed (Flores, 2010). In addition, uncommented scholars experience higher levels of anguish and disappointment since often times they are left with no choice but to start their higher educational journey at community colleges even when they were accepted at highly-selective four year institutions; thus, “entering their local community college with emotional setbacks that student affairs professionals may need to address” (Perez et al., 2010, p. 36).

**Upward Mobility Challenges**

As generation 1.5 grows into adulthood, they often experience problems that are directly linked to their lack of lawful immigration status in the country. For instance, many undocumented youth do not know or fully understand their immigration status until they attempt to partake in rites of passage common during
adolescence, such as registering to vote and/or for the selective service, and/or presenting a state-issue identification (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). Moreover, most undocumented youth find themselves unable to drive legally since they are unable to obtain a driver’s license like their documented counterparts (Takeuchi et al., 2013). Currently, 12 states, including California, and the District of Columbia, have passed laws that allow undocumented individuals to drive legally by granting them a driver’s license, but the large majority of the states do not grant undocumented immigrants driver’s licenses. Undocumented immigrants’ ineligibility to obtain a driver’s license and drive legally often increases their fear of being detained and deported. The legal and social contradictions undocumented youth face place them at an unfair chance of moving up in the socioeconomic ladder by traditional means (Abrego, 2006).

However, if undocumented youth are given the opportunity to earn a college degree and work legally in their field of study, these individuals, who in their majority are bilingual and bicultural, could potentially benefit taxpayers and the U.S. economy (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010).

### Motivation to Persist

Research suggests that even though immigrant scholars, including those in generation 1.5 and first generation US-born, experience added challenges to the youth experience they tend to have a higher drive to succeed than immigrants who have reside in the United States for many generations (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Often times, undocumented scholars attribute their motivation to persist and succeed in higher education to the sacrifices their parents made in order to provide them with a better
future (Perez et al., 2010). In spite of their lack of or limited educational experience, family members of undocumented students actively encourage them to find ways to further their education (Enriquez, 2011). Also, undocumented scholars rely on school professionals, such as professors and counselors to instill in them a sense of hope and optimism (Perez et al., 2010).

**Lack of Information**

The complexity processes of college admissions in the United States and the lack of help and information to navigate it pose a monumental barrier for immigrants, both undocumented, legal immigrants and even U.S.-born youth (Erisman & Looney, 2007). Often times, undocumented students are scrutinized and humiliated at their campuses by institutional agents who lack proper training to work with this population in a sensitive manner (Perez et al., 2010). Neinhusser et al. (2016), point out that often times high school counselors do not have enough information regarding the college options for undocumented students and that often times they do not even attempt to become informed about the topic. Most of the information students receive during their high school years is geared towards U.S. Citizens who are eligible for federal financial aid, while neglecting the needs of undocumented students (Enriquez, 2011). Kaushal suggests that there is a need for outreach and information dissemination about services and benefits available for undocumented students since often times this population does not access these services for lack of awareness about such services (2008).
Disclosure

Given the high level of rejection, discrimination and negative assumption of the undocumented community, undocumented youth often have a hard time disclosing their status to school officials who could otherwise assist them in finding ways to further their education (Perez et al., 2010). These fears and precautions are unfortunately often founded on ignorance and biases by school agents (Perez et al., 2010). However, undocumented scholars not only tend to hide their immigration status from institutional agents but also from their peers and even romantic partners. This lack of disclosure often prevents undocumented youth from benefiting from critical networks and activities that could of have help them (Takeuchi et al., 2013).

Household Obligations

Many immigrants find themselves in the difficult situation of deciding between enrolling in school and attending family obligations such as taking care of an ill family member and contributing monetarily to the household (Erisman & Looney, 2007). These family demands range from contributing economically to the household at an early age to bridging the language gap between their parents and the English-speaking world; these tasks may often derail the educational plans Latinos may have for themselves (Roche, Ghazarian, & Fernandez-Esquer, 2012). Compared to their Caucasian counterparts, Latino youth report having more family obligations that in turn influence their college and employment decisions (Turcios-Cotto & Milan, 2013).
Everyday Challenges

There are activities that are often taken for granted but undocumented youth, once they realize their immigration status find out that those activities are luxuries that they cannot afford. Among these activities is obtaining a job, which undocumented youth without a work permit cannot obtain (Gonzalez & Chavez, 2012). This population also faces challenges when they try to access financial services since banks require a valid social security number and credit history to lend money and some even require a social security number to open a bank account (Takeuchi et al., 2013). Amongst the simpler activities that for undocumented youth are not so simple are: attending R-rated movies, going to bars, flying and even buying a cell phone. These activities often become complicated for generation 1.5 because they lack an acceptable government issued identification card (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010).

Potential Benefits to Society

The formal education of the undocumented population in the United States could yield economic benefits for all factions of society. Unauthorized immigrants account for 8.3 million of the nation’s labor force (Passel & Cohn, 2009). According to the projections by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012), the labor-force growth by native-born workers has been declining with every birth cohort; therefore, a formally educated population of undocumented individuals could help meet the demand for college-educated workers. Furthermore, since better-remunerated jobs yield more revenue in taxes, the U.S. economy could benefit from an increase on taxes at the local, state and federal levels from college-educated undocumented individuals.
In addition to higher tax revenues, society could benefit from increased consumption and greater productivity (Erisman & Looney, 2007). Moreover, society could benefit from the talents and intelligence of undocumented scholars who have managed to succeed in their high school careers (Ortiz & Hinojosa, 2010). Furthermore, the ability to speak multiple languages, and understanding and sensitivity of different cultures could be a contributing factor to the U.S. economy as the nation becomes more economically connected to the rest of the world (Erisman & Looney, 2007). Kaushal argues that access to affordable higher education for the undocumented youth can potentially benefit the U.S. economy (Kaushal, 2008).

Path to Citizenship

Immigration reform bills have been extensively discussed but none have been approved by congress. In recent years, the discourse surrounding a path to citizenship has been focused on a path to citizenship for those who belong to generation 1.5. During the past decade, different forms of the federal Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minor, commonly known as the DREAM Act, have been introduced to the US Congress; however, no version has been approved (Gonzales & Chavez, 2012). Most recently, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act was introduced to Congress to create a path for undocumented scholars who completed at least two years at an institution of higher learning, but like its many successors it did not get enough votes to be approved. The passage of the federal DREAM Act or a similar bill will remove the legal and
economic barriers that currently impede the upward mobility of generation 1.5 (Abrego, 2006).

**Summary**

The research focuses on the challenges experienced by Latino undocumented students in their pursuit of higher education with a special emphasis on the institutional and systemic struggles of students in the state of California. The research also explored the factors that help undocumented Latino scholars power through these challenges and in some cases succeed in their pursuit of higher education. The literature, as pointed out by some of the scholars, is limited by the complexity of this issue and the potential legal ramifications this population may experience as an indirect consequence of research conducted on this population. It is important to acknowledge the institutional and systemic challenges faced by undocumented Latino students in their pursuit of higher education, so as to address them and ensure that this significant large population is able to positively impact future generations and break free from the marginalization to which they have been subjected (Abrego, 2006). Furthermore, the study and acknowledgement of success stories by undocumented students may propel other undocumented students as well as other marginalized students regardless of their immigration status to pursue a college degree. Generation 1.5 represents a large fraction of the youth in the United States and ensuring their academic and personal success is in the best interest of society as a whole. Institutional agents need to be proactive in getting information and resources that can help this population achieve their academic goals. Lastly, since there is not currently a
path for generation 1.5 to legalize their status there needs to be more advocacy for a clear path for this group to adjust their immigration status (Abrego, 2006).
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study focused on the challenges undocumented scholars face in their pursuit of higher education. The research for this study was mixed-methods, relying primarily on one-on-one interviews (Appendix A), an online survey that was available to study subjects via Survey Monkey, and a literature review. The researcher opted to use a mixed methods approach, so as to best and fully address the research questions:

1. What are some of the challenges undocumented students face in their pursuit of higher education?
2. What are some of the challenges children of undocumented parents face in their pursuit of higher education?
3. What initiatives/practices can be put in place to eliminate these challenges?

The usage of different approaches for data collection allow researchers to use the strengths of each method of data collection to complement each other; thus, yielding better and fully explored results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Sample

The sampling pool was made up of undocumented Latinos and US citizen/permanent residents whose at least one parent of Latino/Hispanic descent is undocumented. All study participants were at least 18 years of age and they were currently attending or had at one point attended an institution of higher learning in the Sacramento region. Both men and women were included in this study.
Data Collection

Study participants were recruited using the snowball sampling method; the researcher opted to use the snowball sampling data collection method because the study deals with a hidden population and it is in regards to a sensitive issue and this method was developed to facilitate data collection in these instances (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). Undocumented individuals are often stigmatized and therefore tend to keep their immigration status private. The snowball sample collection allows for the researcher to increase the sampled population by getting references from the initial participants (Thomson, 1997). The assumption is that the initially identified participants share a bond with others in similar conditions and therefore have the ability to provide the researcher with an ever-expanding pool of possible participants (Berg, 1988). The researcher also sent out an e-mail (Appendix B) to local organizations that work with undocumented individuals, such as the on-campus Dreamer Resource Center, requesting these organizations to forward the e-mail to their list serves. The e-mail explicitly asks receivers not to disclose names and/or contact information of possible study participants to the researcher; this is in efforts to give possible participants the choice of self-identification and choice of participating in the study. Furthermore, allowing study participants to self-identify and opt-in to the study helps keep their identity secret. In an effort to increase the sample population, the researcher e-mailed the presidents of Latino Greek Fraternities and Sororities on-campus and visited their meetings to answer any questions the members of these organizations had. Given the challenges the researcher faced to gain approval to
conduct this study, he was surprised to find out the high level of understanding and value these groups expressed on the importance of research on undocumented scholars.

The researcher used the Gold version of Survey Monkey to collect data without tracking individual participants nor collecting IP addresses; this was done in order to ensure the confidentiality of the study. Study participants provided consent by proceeding to take the survey. For the survey portion of the study, the researcher provided study participants with a link to the survey in which he inquired about study’s participants’ challenges/obstacles they faced, if any, in their pursuit of higher education. The online survey also collected general demographic information, such as gender and age group. This survey was online and therefore, it was taken at the study subjects’ most convenient time and place. This allowed for study participants to take their time explaining the challenges they faced without feeling rushed or pressure to shape their responses in a specific way. Furthermore, online data collection increases data accuracy since respondents enter their responses straight to the database and it eliminates human error during data transferring (Topp & Pawloski, 2002). A challenge to online data collection is that the researcher does not have control of who is taking the survey and it may allow for individuals who do not meet the eligibility requirements to fill out the survey anyways and this may compromised the veracity of the data collected (Topp & Pawloski, 2002). The survey was also available in Spanish at the study subjects’ request. At the end of the survey, study participants were given the option to be part of a focus group to further explore the challenges faced by this
individual person; however, due to the challenges faced by the researcher to access the study’s population, the researcher changed his methodology from focus group to individual interviews.

Interviews were conducted in a public place that was convenient for those who chose to participate in the interview. Interview participants were given a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix C) to read prior to starting the interview; however, signatures were not collected from interview participants in order to keep their identity confidential. Through the informed consent form the researcher obtained permission to use an audio recording device to record the participants’ responses. Participants’ responses were transcribed verbatim by the researcher within one week of data collection.

**Data Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze data regarding the challenges of Latino undocumented students in Northern California in order to identify patterns. The data for this study was gathered through online surveys and one-on-one interviews. Once data was collected, the researcher transcribed verbatim the information gathered through interviews, and then question by question the researcher employed qualitative coding to analyze the respondents’ answers in order to identify patterns and themes. The researcher used preset codes and emerging codes from the participants’ responses to analyze and categorize the data collected. Quantitative data was organized in tables and graphs to facilitate its presentation and interpretation.
Protection of Human Subjects

The researcher completed the Human Subjects application, consent forms, and questionnaires and submitted them to the College of Education’s Human Subjects committee for their review. The Human Subjects committee reviewed this study’s protocol and granted the researcher approval as “Exempt” under the code of federal regulations (45 CFR 46.101.(b)(2) on December 18, 2015; Human Subject’s approval number: 15-16-12-02. This study was originally considered to be “minimal risk” because participation could be categorized as daily conversation. Moreover, participation was voluntary and participants were given the option to skip any questions they did not feel comfortable answering or cease participation as a whole without any repercussions. No personal information regarding the identity of participants was to be collected through any of the study’s data collection tools. Additional efforts to protect the participants’ confidentiality as well as anonymity were taken by using the Gold version of Survey Monkey, the use of pseudonyms and the deletion of their recorded voice.

The researcher faced, to certain extent, some of the challenges the undocumented population faces when navigating the higher education system when his initial approval by the College of Education was revoked due to a series of misunderstandings about the study’s population safety. The lack of understanding and information regarding the rights of undocumented scholars, especially those under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Study led to an increased fear from a very small group of students at Sacramento State that consequently demanded that all
studies involving undocumented scholars were stopped. Upon hearing these concerns, the College of Education e-mailed the researcher instructing him to suspend the study and take down his online survey until further notice. A few days later, the researcher was contacted by the university’s institutional review board to corroborate details on data collection procedures. The university’s IRB e-mailed a list of changes that they wanted to be implemented in order for the researcher to gain his approval back. After submitting the revision requested by the university’s IRB, the researcher regained his research approval back as “Expedited” under the code of federal regulations (45 CFR 46.101.(7)) on March 24, 2016; Human Subject’s approval number: 15-16-096.

Even though the researcher had regained approval from the university’s IRB, he encountered more challenges when he contacted the DRC for help distributing a link to his online survey. As result of the IRB’s initial suspension of the studies involving undocumented individuals, the DRC opted to not assist researchers with the recruitment of possible participants unless those in the DRC’s list serve had provided written consent to receive e-mails regarding research opportunities.

Participation in this study did not provide any direct nor immediate benefit to the study’s participants, but the study may bring awareness to the general population of the challenges faced by this population and inform institutions of higher learning as well as policy makers on ways to better serve this population in order to increase the promotion and retention of undocumented scholars at institutions of higher learning.

The researcher was the only person who had access to the data provided by the study’s participants, and it was kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

This research study seeks to explore the challenges faced by Latino/a undocumented scholars in their pursuit of higher education in the Sacramento region. Demographic characteristics as well as variables that help assess the challenges faced by this population were taken into consideration for this study. Surveys were posted online through the Gold version of Survey Monkey and one-on-one interviews were conducted with those who opted to participate in this section of the study. A total of 24 online surveys were collected (Appendix D). Previous literature informed this study that access to the specific population for this study would be challenging given that the population is a ‘hidden’ population, and the sensibility of the campus community negatively contributed to the lack of reach of human subjects. For the one-on-one interview section of the study (Appendix A), 10 participants opted to contribute to this research and were interviewed by the researcher.

Demographics

Data revealed that the majority of the respondents, 11, were from Mexico (45.83%), which was expected since the majority of the Latino undocumented immigrants come from Mexico (Passel & Cohn, 2010). Five (20.83%) were U.S. citizens with at least one undocumented parent, three (12.50%) were from Central America (e.g., Guatemala and El Salvador), one (4.17%) respondent was from South America, and four (16.67%) declined to self-identify.
Participant’s demographic information was organized in a table that identifies the questions, levels and participant responses (Table 1). The specific target population for this study was undocumented scholars and students who were born to at least one undocumented parent that are currently enrolled or at some point were enrolled in an institution of higher education in the Sacramento region. The male to female ratio was proportional with 13 (54.17%) of the study’s participants identifying as males, 10 (41.67%) as females and one (4.17%) declined to self-identify with either gender. Demographic information pertaining to age was collected in bracket forms in order to help maintain participants’ identity confidential and also because some participants might not feel comfortable providing their exact age. One (4.17%) of the study’s participants self-identified as being between the ages of 18 and 19 years old, 14 (58.33%) self-identified as being between 20 to 24 years old, eight (33.33%) as between the ages of 25 and 29, and one (4.17%) as older than 35 years old.
Table 1

*Latino Undocumented Scholars’ Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>% of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-19 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-24 years old</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-29 years old</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-34 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35+ years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years residing in the United States</td>
<td>&lt;1 year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16+ years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62.50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of education attended</td>
<td>Undergraduate (Community College)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate (State University)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate (University of California)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate/Professional (State University)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.33 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate/Professional (University of California)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: _________________________________</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of education completed</td>
<td>Undergraduate (Community College)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate (State University)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate (University of California)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.83 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate/Professional (State University)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate/Professional (University of California)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: _________________________________</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.33 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most participants (91.67%) declared to have resided in the United States for more than a decade. One (4.17%) of the study’s participants declared to have been residing in the United States for one to five years, another one (4.17%) for six to ten years, seven (29.17%) for 11 to 15 years, 15 (62.50%) for over 16 years, and one (4.17%) respondent declined to answer this question (Figure 1). It is important to note that amongst those who reported to be living in the United States for over 16 years might be individuals who were born in the United States to at least one undocumented parent.

Figure 1. Distribution of Time Living in the U.S.
Representation in Institutional Settings, Majors, and GPAs

Two (8.33%) of the study participants declared to have attended at least community college, 13 (54.17%) a State University as an undergraduate, six (25.00%) a University of California as an undergraduate, and two (8.33%) a State University as a graduate student; all study participants attended an institution of higher learning in the Sacramento region. Amongst those who have already completed a degree at an institution of higher learning in the Sacramento region, four (16.67%) completed their degree/certification at a community college, seven (29.17%) completed an undergraduate degree at a State University, five (20.83%) completed an undergraduate degree at a University of California, three (12.50%) completed a graduate degree at a State University, three (12.50%) declare to have completed another type of degree without specifying the type, and two (8.33%) decline to state their highest level of education they completed.

The students reported a wide array of majors from STEM (e.g., math, computer science, engineering, etc.), humanities, business administration, social sciences and public services. Seven (29.17%) participants reported pursuing studies in the STEM fields, five (20.83%) are studying in the field of social sciences (e.g., political science, international relations, anthropology, etc.), another five (20.83%) of the study’s participants reported to be studying in public service fields (e.g. child development, education, etc.), another five (20.83) are studying in the field of humanities (e.g., English, Spanish, etc.), and two (8.33%) of the participants reported to be studying business administration (Figure 2).
The participants were, given their circumstances, high achievers (Figure 3). Only one out of the 24 online surveys respondents reported to have a grade point average (GPA) of lower than a 2.0, which led to the participant’s academic dismissal from the institution where (s)he was attending. Four (16.67%) reported to have a GPA between a 2.0 and a 2.49, 11 (45.83%) have a GPA between a 2.5 and a 2.99, six (25.00%) indicated that they had a GPA between a 3.0 and a 3.49, and two (8.33%) of the respondents reported to have a GPA higher than a 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.
Figure 3. Self-reported Cumulative Grade Point Average During College.

Twenty-three (95.83%) of the participants indicated that they are working: five (20.83%) said they are working in the field of education, three (12.50%) in the food service industry, one (4.17%) in engineering, and the others hold a wide range of positions.

**Parental Information**

Data regarding participants’ parental educational attainment and citizenship status was collected and organized in a table that identifies the questions, levels and participant responses (Table 2). The undocumented to mixed-status family ratio was proportional with 11 (45.83%) of the study’s participants declaring that none of their parents are US citizens or lawful permanent residents and 12 (50.00%) declaring that one or both parents were either US citizens or lawful permanent residents, and one
(4.17%) of the study’s participants declined to answer. Out of the 12 participants who declared that at least one of their parents was either a US citizen or a lawful permanent resident, one (4.17%) of them indicated that their father was the one who had a lawful status, four (16.67%) of them indicated it was their mother who had a lawful status, and seven (29.17%) indicated both parents had a lawful status.

Table 2

*Parents’ Educational Attainment and Citizenship Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th># of participants</th>
<th>% of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s highest level of education completed</td>
<td>No schooling completed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;8 grade</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.S. Diploma or Equivalent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some college but no degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trade/Technical/Vocational Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctorate/Professional Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s highest level of education completed</td>
<td>No schooling completed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;8 grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.S. Diploma or Equivalent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
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<td>Some college but no degree</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Trade/Technical/Vocational Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctorate/Professional Degree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any parent a US Citizen or lawful permanent resident</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>45.83%</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, mother</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decline to state</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ratio of mothers to fathers who have not completed any schooling was also proportional with almost one-third (29.17%) of both, mothers and fathers, not having completed any formal education. Eight (33.33%) of the participants indicated that their mother had completed less than eighth grade education whereas five (20.83%) of the participants indicated their father had completed the same level of education. Two (8.33%) of the participants indicated that their mother completed some high school education, and four (16.67%) indicated that their mother received a high school diploma or the equivalent of it. The numbers were similar for their fathers: one (4.17%) participant indicated that their father had completed some high school and six (25.00%) indicated that their father had received a high school diploma or the equivalent of it. One (4.17%) of the study’s participants indicated that both of their parents have completed a bachelor’s degree. Not a significant number of participants indicated that either of their parents held a degree higher than a bachelor’s to report, and only one (4.17%) of the participants declined to state their mother’s level of educational attainment, and two (8.33%) declined to state their father’s level of educational attainment.

**DACA and Its Benefits**

Question five asked participants to state whether or not they were protected under President Obama’s executive action commonly known as DACA, and what benefits, if any, had they experienced because of this protection. Study participants were also given the option to skip this question if they did not feel comfortable
answering. Fifteen (62.50%) of the study participants indicated that they had DACA, four (16.67%) indicated that they were not protected under DACA, and five (20.83%) declined to answer. Amongst the most recurring benefits as indicated by those who indicated that they were protected under DACA was the eligibility to apply and receive state financial aid, most commonly known as Cal-Grants, the ability to obtain a well-remunerated job and a decrease of fear from deportation. Some also listed the ability to work in their field of study as a benefit of being protected under DACA.

**Experiences Based on (Parental) Undocumented Status**

When asked if they have been discriminated based on their immigration status, 14 (58.33%) of the respondents said they have not been discriminated based on their immigration status; however, this percentage included one (4.17%) respondent who indicated (s)he had not been discriminated based on their immigration status but went on to explain that if they had been discriminated (s)he had not noticed. Only one (4.17%) of the respondents stated that they had been discriminated based on their immigration status, but accepted this behavior as a behavior expected towards the undocumented population. The respondent added that this behavior was to be expected since (s)he “was an illegal and therefore wasn’t supposed to be here.” Nine (37.50%) of the respondents declined to state whether or not they had been discriminated based on their immigration status.

**Challenges**

The top three challenges survey respondents identified as their biggest challenge(s) in their pursuit of higher education was paying for school and school
related expenses, balancing work, school and family obligations, and navigating the process of enrolling into college and accessing services. Twenty (83.33%) of the survey respondents said they had to work while attending school and the other four (16.67%) declined to state if they had to work or not. Out of the respondents who said they had to work while attending school, the average number of hours worked while attending school was 30, and a few respondents stated that they had to work three different jobs to pay tuition. All of the respondents who declared they had to work while attending school said they believed that having to work to support their studies directly impacted their academic performance and overall college experience. Some of the respondents, directly linked having to work while attending school to failing classes, being placed on academic probation by their institution, and being overly stressed.

When asked if they had any responsibilities in their households while attending college, 16 (66.67%) of the respondents said they did; these ranged from taking care of siblings to helping out economically. One (4.17%) respondent said (s)he had to commute three hours three times a week because his/her family needed him/her to help out at home and take care of his/her siblings. Four (16.67%) of the respondents said they did not have responsibilities in their household and four (16.67%) declined to answer.

**Resources & Paying for College**

Fourteen (58.33%) of the respondents stated that they believed their academic/career counselors were unable to provide proper guidance because of their
legal status. A pattern that emerged from the open-ended section of this question was that counselors were not familiar with the ways in which these students were able to continue their education and/or the career possibilities after high school. The majority of the survey respondents listed peers and family as their main source of support during their college career. In terms of financial assistance, respondents listed the wages from their jobs and family contributions as their main form of financial assistance. Those who benefited from the passage of the California Dream Act listed the Board of Governors and Cal-grants as their main source of financial support supplemented by their wages and family contributions. Respondents who benefit(ed) from the California Dream Act also stated that thanks to it they were able to continue their education without worrying as much about its cost, and for some it gave them a sense of equality. One of the respondents wrote:

The California Dream Act did not only help me finish my graduate studies economically, but it also provided moral support. I finally felt like I was equal on all aspects as everyone else on campus. I was able to get financial help, which came late on my academic career but it brought hope that many people in my situation will be able to pursue higher education, given that many might not count with as much support from their parents as I did.

In terms of academics, three (12.50%) respondents listed equity programs, such as EOPs, and institutional agents (e.g., professors and academic counselors) as a source of academic and moral support.
Motivation to Persist

All survey respondents indicated that their parents placed a high value on their academics and that their parents always highlighted education as the key to break free from the conditions associated with their undocumented status. One of the respondents wrote:

My parents did place high importance in higher education. Ever since I was in elementary school, they have been pushing me to do well academically. While attending high school they always told me they would help me (financially) to complete my bachelor’s degree. They encouraged me to pursue a master’s degree as well and with their financial support I was able to accomplish it. Narratives of moral and economic support are the theme and the main motivator respondents identified as their drive to persist and succeed in college.

Another theme that emerged as a motivator to pursue a college degree was the respondents witnessing the struggles their family experienced as a result of not having a formal education themselves. One of the respondents wrote:

I think growing up and watching my parents work every single day and multiple jobs motivated me to get a college education. I want to give them a better life and help them financially, so that they do not have to work as much anymore.

Some respondents also mentioned their peers and institutional agents from equity programs as key motivators to pursue a college degree despite their immigration and low-socioeconomic status.
Advice for Others

All respondents have positive words of advice for other students that may be uncertain about a college education due to their immigration status. Most respondents call for prospect college students to defy the odds, to never give up and to advocate for themselves. One respondent wrote:

Don’t give up, and when you feel like giving up think of the sacrifices your family has endured for you to be where you are and where you’re headed. Also, learn to advocate for yourself and others, so that our dream can become a reality.

Another theme that emerged from the advice given by survey respondents was the need to prove that the California Dream Act was an investment rather than an expense for the State of California. Respondents encouraged other 1.5 generation students to do well in school, to earn their college degrees, and to give back to their communities. One respondent wrote:

Now that we are given a greater opportunity to attend college, take advantage of it! Make the state realize that this financial help that they are providing us with is worth it. In this way, maybe, the state will help us in a greater manner.

Immigration Status and College Decisions

This section examines what influence, if any, the respondents’ immigration status had in their decisions of where to attend college.
Question: Did Your Immigration Status Have any Influence on your College of Choice?

Synopsis of undocumented status on college of attendance. One theme that emerged from the participants’ responses to this question is that their undocumented status did influence their decision of which college to attend. One of the differences in their statements was the extent in which their immigration status limited their options. Most of the respondents said that their immigration status left them feeling like community college was the only choice and that everything else was out of reach.

Adela. She stated that her immigration status played a major role in her college decisions because even though she was qualified to attend a four-year institution right after high school she had to go to community college first. Adela stated that she dreamt with going away to either UC San Diego or San Diego State but given her immigration status this was just a dream from which she had to wake up to a crude reality.

German. German is from a small town that only has one public community college nearby and he wanted to go away for college. He said that even though he knew that given his immigration status he was not going to receive any financial aid he did not let that stop him from going away. He said that the only way his status played a role on his college of choice was on limiting how much he allowed himself to dream.

Raul. He stated that he lost hope to pursue a college education because his high school counselor told him that he could not attend college unless he put down a
fake social security number and Raul did not want to take his chances with that, so he
did not file an application for any college until May of his senior year. His senior year
he met an alumnus from his high school that was also undocumented and about to
graduate from college. Since it was too late for him to apply to a four-year institution
he ended up attending a community college.

**Hector.** Although Hector wanted to attend a four-year institution right after
high school, he said he knew his undocumented status prompted him to reroute his
plans. He said he was a bit disappointed to not be able to attend the college of his
choice right after high school, but that he knew he was going to get there at some
point.

**Homero.** Homero said he wanted to be realistic with his choices and anything
but community college wasn’t. He said that if it wasn’t for his immigration status he
would of have looked into different options but given his status there was no point to
waste time on that.

**Xochiltl.** She said that her immigration status was the only reason she did not
go to her college of choice and had to attend community college first. She said that
even after community college she felt that nothing was different and that her only
choice to further her education was the local State University.

**Karla.** Karla said that unfortunately she did not do as good as she would of
have wanted in high school and attributed that to not being able to see a point in her
education since she was undocumented and likely she was not going to be able to get a
college degree and/or a job in her field of choice. Indirectly, Karla attributed her college of attendance to her immigration status.

**Ramon.** He said his immigration status definitely influenced him to go to a community college first. He said that being from a small town and seeing his parents work in the fields from sunrise to sunset made him realize that he needed to stay local, so as to be able to help out his parents. He said that he if he had counted with financial aid, then he would most likely had ventured out of town, but that since that was not the case he could not put the burden of college expenses on his family.

**Elvia.** She said her undocumented status made the college navigation process very confusing. She said some institutional agents would tell her that she could go to college and get financial aid just like everyone else if she put down all zeros as her social security number on the federal financial aid application (FAFSA), some others told her that she could go to college but with no financial aid, and some others told her that she could not go to college at all. She said that because of these mixed information, she decided to go to a community college first and pay her tuition herself, even the California Dream Act was already in place.

**Lucas.** He said that the only was his immigration status influenced his decision on what college to attend to was that it limited his choices, but it never completely made him believe that he was not going to get anywhere.

**Immigration Status and Number of Classes Taken**

This section examines how the respondents’ immigration status influenced the number of classes they enrolled in per term (quarter/semester).
Question: Did/Does Your Immigration Status Have any Influence on the Number of Classes You Take per Term (Quarter/Semester)? If so, How Did/does it Influence This Decision?

Synopsis of undocumented status and number of classes taken. The common theme from the participants’ responses is that their immigration status heavily influenced the number of classes they would take. Those who attended community college said they would not take as many classes since they had to pay for every unit they were enrolled for and that they had to balance their schooling with work and family obligations. The participants that attend(ed) a state university also said their immigration status prompted them to take a lot of classes on a given term, so as to get more out of their money. Two of the participants in this category said that the price they had to pay for this was too high since they were always overwhelmed by the amount of class related work they had to do and it led them to be academically dismissed from their institutions. Another theme that emerged from the answers to this question was that the California Dream Act had somewhat lifted a burden off their shoulders, and participants now felt they could really focus on their studies as opposed to focusing on making ends meet.

Adela. She stated that while in college she was very conscious of her immigration status and that because of it she had no time to waste on classes she did not need. She said that in community college her immigration status had little to no impact since the cost of it is based on the number of units taken rather than part-
time/full-time status. She said she would always try to take as many units as she could afford without it affecting her work schedule.

**German.** He said that his immigration status prompted him more than the 12 units he needed to be considered as a full-time student. German attended a State University and he said that since he was already paying the same amount he wanted to take full advantage of his money. German also said the pressure his immigration status put on him made him overwhelmed himself with more classes than he was able to handle.

**Raul.** Raul said that his immigration status did play an important role in the number of classes he would enrolled in, since he was not only paying for the number of units he was taking but he also needed to work to afford those units.

**Hector.** Similar to Raul, Hector stated that because his immigration status and his need to work to afford tuition and books he limited the number of classes he would take on a given semester to be able to balance work, school and family obligations.

**Homero.** Homero stated that his immigration status played and still plays a key role on the number of classes he pays. He said he has been enrolled at a local community college since 2006 and since most of the time he had to pay for his college units out-of-pocket he would limit the number of classes he would enrolled in. He mentioned that since he could not get a driver’s license he had to allocate time to get to school and work using the public transportation system. Now that Homero is eligible for state financial aid under the California Dream Act, he said that some of his burdens were lifted but most of the damage to his college career has been done and
that the burden of his immigration status stills dictates most of his decisions regarding college.

**Xochiltl.** She said her immigration status prompted her to limit the number of classes she would take on a given semester, so as to be able to work to pay for her college tuition and expenses. Xochiltl also said that if it was not for that she would be done with her master’s by now.

**Karla.** Karla said she only had to pay for her tuition her first year of college and that at the time she would somewhat limit the number and type of classes she would take. Now that Karla receives state financial aid, she said she is able to take her college education a day at the time and take more classes in order to transfer to a four-year institution. She also mentioned that now she is able to take other classes that are not necessarily needed for transferring or for her major in order to learn a little bit more about other subjects.

**Ramon.** He said that while he was in community college he would limit the number of classes he would take so as to be able to work to afford tuition and to be able to contribute monetarily to his household. Now that Ramon transferred to a local state university, he said he does his best to take five classes every semester so as to make the most of the financial aid he receives through the California Dream Act.

**Elvia.** She said that she also would limit the number of classes she would take in community college so as to make sure she could afford tuition and college related expenses. Now that Elvia transferred to a local state university and she receives state financial aid, she said she feels like she does not have to worry about how many
classes she can afford. She said she feels like she can focus a bit more on her studies rather than on whether she can afford tuition.

**Lucas.** Lucas said that since he went straight to a local state university, he would take as many classes as he could so as to ensure he was getting the most for his money. He said that now he knows that was not a good call on his part because he was always overwhelmed trying to pass his classes and unfortunately it led to him being dismissed from his institution. After being dismissed, Lucas said he attended a community college where he did not make the same mistake of overloading himself, and now he transferred back to a local state university. Lucas is now eligible for state financial aid and he said he is making sure he takes enough classes to make progress towards his degree, but being careful not to overload himself.

**Undocumented Status and Major Choice**

This section examines if the study’s participants’ immigration status played a role in the subject area they chose to study.

**Question: Did/does Your Immigration Status Have any Influence on the Major You Chose? If so, how Did/does it Influence This Decision?**

**Synopsis of undocumented status and major of choice.** Most respondents stated that their immigration status had no influence on what they decided to study. Most of them acknowledged that the future is uncertain in regards to whether they will be able to work in their fields of study, but they also said they remain optimistic.

**Adela.** Adela changed majors twice during her college career. She started with journalism, and after discovering that it was not for her she switched over to child
development. She said she wants to become a teacher and even though, at the time, she knew it was going to be difficult to get her credentials conferred by the State of California she did not let this stop her. She said she hoped that by the time she was done with her undergraduate career the law would allow her to obtain her credentials.

**German.** He said that his undocumented status had no influence on the major he chose. He had always wanted to become an engineer and even though he was academically dismissed his major was not dependent of his status.

**Raul.** Raul stated that he did not go for the major he really wanted because he knew that even if he were to earn a degree in that field he would not be able to work in that field. He said that it is possible to work in one’s field of study but the criminal justice system was different. He said that even now that he has a work permit he would not likely be able to obtain a job in law enforcement given that he is considered an “illegal”.

**Hector.** He said he has always known that he wanted to study engineering and that his undocumented status has rerouted him a lot, but he was not going to allow it to derail him from his dream to be an engineer. Hector said that he is glad to not have let his status influence his major because now that he has earned a master’s and has a work permit, he is able to work in his field of choice.

**Homero.** He said his immigration status has not played a role in his area of study, and that he hopes to be able to work in his field once he earns his bachelor’s.

**Xochiltl.** Similar to Homero and Hector, Xochiltl said she has not allowed her immigration status to play a role on her major. She said that she is almost done with
her master’s and that once her degree is conferred her status would not dictate what she can or cannot do.

**Ramon.** Ramon said that his immigration status has influenced and dictated a lot of decisions in his life, and that he was not going to compromise what potentially could be his job for the rest of his life. He said he wants to work in something that satisfies him personally and that challenges him every day opposed to playing it safe in a job or area of study he had no interest on.

**Elvia.** She stated that her major is what she hopes to do for a living in the near future, and that a lot of good changes are taking place at the state and federal level so she is optimistic that she will be able to work in her field.

**Lucas.** Lucas said some people have discouraged him from pursuing a degree in criminal justice, but similarly to Elvia he said he wants to study and work in something he is truly passionate about. Lucas shares Ramon’s outlook for the future.

**Positive Aspects of Immigration Status**

This section examines the respondents’ perspectives regarding their immigration status, and whether or not they feel there is something good regarding their current undocumented status.

**Synopsis of Positive Aspects of Immigration Status**

Respondents had mixed ideas of how their immigration status had positively affected their lives. Most of them were able to recognize a few positive characteristics that they display because of their undocumented status. Among the top characteristics mentioned by those who said they believe there were positive aspects to their
immigration status were an increase on their drive and an increase sense of appreciation. On the other hand, some respondents said they did not see any benefits to their undocumented status. These respondents only attributed negative aspects to their status and mentioned that their lives would be easier if they were not undocumented.

**Adela.** Adela said that given all the struggles she has had to face because of her status it was hard for her to even consider this question before it was asked. She said that thinking about it her undocumented status has made her more driven and appreciative of the things she does have. She said that maybe her undocumented status has pushed her to be more diligent in her studies and everything she does.

**German.** He said that for him there is nothing good about his status. He said that his life would be easier if he was not undocumented.

**Raul.** Raul acknowledged the struggles he has faced because of his immigration status and he said that given those struggles it was hard for him to see any benefits.

**Hector.** He said that he does not necessarily considers it as a benefit linked to his undocumented status, but that he does acknowledge that he has had to work harder for the things he has and for his schooling; therefore, his achievements are even more rewarding.

**Homero.** Homero said that like everything else, there are multiple angles to look at situations, and that he chooses to believe that his status has empowered him to be more open and receptive to others. He also said that because of his status he has
gained skills that otherwise he would not have learned like self-advocacy and determination.

**Xochiltl.** She said that her status is definitely limiting, but it has also allowed her to prove herself in many areas. Xochiltl said she believes that because of her immigration status she has been able to accomplish some things that maybe otherwise she would of have taken for granted and would of have not accomplished them.

**Karla.** She said she was conflicted because she said she sees how her undocumented status has prompted some good qualities in her, but she also said she does not know if those qualities would not be there if she was not undocumented.

**Ramon.** Ramon said that he cannot attribute any benefits to his status, and that his status has done anything for him but make him work hard for what others take for granted.

**Elvia.** Elvia stated that her undocumented status has allowed her to realize her potential, while setting an example for others documented and undocumented alike. She said that through her struggles, she is able to convey a message to others that challenges are there to be overcome and that it is possible even if it takes longer.

**Lucas.** He said that because of his immigration status he has grown so much and faster than others. He said that because of it he now has priorities in life and plans to make his dreams come true.
Academic Disadvantages and Potential Opportunities

This section examines the participants’ perspectives on whether or not their undocumented status has placed them at an academic disadvantage when it comes to their academics and potential opportunities.

Synopsis of Academic Disadvantages and Potential Opportunities

Overwhelmingly, all study participants stated that they feel their undocumented status places them at an academic disadvantage compared to their documented counterparts including other Latinos. All of them said that they believe their academic performance would be higher if they did not have to worry about their immigration status. Some respondents also said to have lost opportunities for work advancement.

Adela. Adela said that although she has never been a straight A student, she feels that if she did not have the worries that come with her undocumented status her GPA would of have probably been higher than what it was. In terms of opportunities, Adela said that her undocumented status has definitely impacted her opportunities. She said that her status has limited her job prospective and opportunities for advancement. She also mentioned that she has lost opportunities to be part of national presentations as well as travel.

German. He said that if it was not for his status he would probably had done better in school and that he would still be in school. He also said that now he feels stuck with the current job he has and that he will likely not be promoted.
Raul. He stated that if he was a legal resident his GPA would likely be higher and that he would most likely be attending a four-year institution with more prestige. In terms of opportunities, he said he lost a scholarship to play soccer at the professional level since it required a valid social security number that at the time he did not have.

Hector. Hector said that if he was a legal resident or a citizen he would probably would not have taken so long to finish his undergraduate degree, and his overall GPA would of have been higher. He also mentioned that he would probably not have struggle as much to get a well-remunerated job.

Homero. Homero said he feels that he was deprived from equitable opportunities to earn his college degree. He said that he did not have access to academic support programs that other students have access to, and that access to such programs would probably have positively impacted his academic performance. In terms of opportunities, Homero said that he could have been working less and making more money if he did not have to opt for labor intensive and low-remunerated jobs.

Xochiltl. She said that her status did place her at a disadvantage when it came to academics. Xochiltl stated that the struggle of having to balance, work, school, and the constant uncertainty of her future do take a toll on her overall performance. She said that even basic student accommodations that require no funding were a struggle to get. She also said that although she has a good GPA her life would of have been easier if she was not undocumented or if there were at least programs in place that she could access.
Karla. Karla said that she feels she could have performed even better academically if she was documented. She also said that because of her status she has had to settle for less than she deserves or is capable of achieving.

Ramon. Ramon said that he feels there is certain level of disadvantage given his status and that this has negatively impacted or at the very least limited his performance.

Elvia. She said that her undocumented status has limited her opportunities and placed her at a disadvantage compared to students who are documented and therefore have access to support services on campus. She also mentioned that she even feels that she is even at more disadvantage than the documented Latino population. Elvia said that although her undocumented status has not prevented her from fighting for what she wants, she said she feels that her life would not involve so many struggles just to get what everyone else gets without so much effort.

Lucas. Lucas said that he is at a disadvantage in every way one wants to look at his situation. He said that a college degree should not be a luxury, and that if he was documented his GPA would be higher and he would probably would have graduated already.

Possible Actions by Institutions of Higher Learning

This section will examine the recommendation undocumented students have for institutions of higher learning to ensure the academic success and retention of the Latino undocumented community at their respective campuses.
Question: What Should Institutions of Higher Learning do to Ensure the Academic Success (Retention) of Latino Undocumented Scholars?

Synopsis of possible actions by institutions of higher learning. A common theme that emerged from the answers to this question was the need for culturally sensitive and competent staff. Most respondents said that often times institutional agents are not culturally sensitive to their needs nor are they aware of the resources available to them. Another theme that emerged from the participants’ responses was the need for the expansion of services already offered by institutions, so as to ensure equitable access by the student body.

Adela. Adela said that institution of higher learning should incorporate peer mentoring programs geared towards students who come from historically underserved populations. She also said that expanding the hours of service of the tutoring center, so as to accommodate for working students.

German. He said that one action institutions of higher learning need to take is to train their staff on how to serve undocumented students.

Raul. Raul said he believes institutions of higher learning need to work on their intervention practices because according to him they act when it is already late. He also said that there is a need for staff that is culturally sensitive and competent.

Hector. He says that he believes most services are already in place but that institutions of higher learning need to work on making sure all students are aware of the services provided by the campus.
**Homero.** Homero said campuses should train their staff to work with undocumented students in a way that students feel welcome and supportive. He said that trust is a major barrier for undocumented students to access services.

**Xochiltl.** Xochiltl said that campuses need to expand the services they already have and that there is definitely a need for trained staff to work with the undocumented population.

**Karla.** Karla said she would like to see equitable access to all programs offered by academic institutions, and she also said that academic institutions need to be active advocates for their students including the undocumented population.

**Ramon.** Ramon said institutions of higher learning need to start more initiatives that bring awareness to the crude realities underserve populations, including undocumented students, experience. He also said that there is an urgent need for culturally sensitive staff, and ethnic representation amongst faculty and staff.

**Elvia.** Elvia said that institutions need to ensure their staff is aware of the resources available to undocumented students. She said that many institutional agents still believe that undocumented students cannot attend college, and if they are in college is because they put down a fake information.

**Lucas.** Lucas said there academic institutions need to make sure all of the staff that work directly with students have cultural training, and he also said that institutional agents who work directly with students need to be aware for the resources available for the undocumented population.
Synopsis of Overall Challenges and Experiences by Undocumented Students

The ten participants of the one-on-one interview section of this study had similar experiences and perspectives regarding the challenges they have had to face given their undocumented status. Some attribute some of their good characteristics, such as persistence and drive, to their undocumented status while others feel that their immigration status has only negatively affected their lives. Most participants in this section of the study said they feel institutional agents are not properly trained in cultural sensitivity, and that institutional agents often ignore the services and resources for which undocumented students are eligible. Respondents said that institutions need to acknowledge the special needs of the undocumented student body and work on creating equitable initiatives so as to increase the number of undocumented Latino students enrolled at their institutions as well as increase the retention and graduation rates of this population.

The results allowed for the examination of the financial, process navigation, and everyday struggles faced by the Latino undocumented population in their pursuit of higher education. The results also shone some light into the factors that propel undocumented Latinos to defy the status quo and continue to further their education. The participants’, both those who filled out the online survey and those who were interviewed, provided some insight into the institutional and systemic challenges often faced by the Latino undocumented community as they attempt to pursue higher education at institutions of higher learning in Northern California. Most participants called attention to the need to expand services to this faction of the Latino population,
and the need to ensure information about available services is disseminated in an
effective manner so as to reach more students. Respondents also expressed their
frustration with the lack of information available for undocumented Latinos and/or the
mix messages this population often receives from institutional agents that are
supposed to easy the path towards higher education. They highlighted the importance
of family and peers on their decision and persistence to further their education. They
also spoke about the financial hardship they have experienced, and how federal and
state programs, such as DACA and the California Dream Act, have positively
impacted their life and studies. However, they also pointed out that there is a long
way to go when it comes to federal and state policies to ensure more and more
students in their situation are able to continue their education. In addition to the
financial hardships to afford tuition fees, the participants also spoke about the family
obligations that in a way hold them back. Participants mentioned having to work
multiple jobs to be able to contribute financially to their households, and one
participants even spoke about having to commute every day to help out his/her parents
with his/her siblings. Overall, all but one of the participants have managed to defy the
odds to continue their college education, and some of them have earned their
undergraduate degrees and gone for graduate degrees.

This research provides further examination of the challenges and experiences
of Latino scholars in their pursuit of higher education. This chapter provides the
findings as well as an analysis of the online survey results, and one-on-one interviews
with ten Latino undocumented participants who have attended an institution of higher
learning in Northern California. Some of the findings were that they all struggled financially because their undocumented status made them ineligible for financial aid and even after the passage of the California Dream Act in 2011 they continue to struggle given that they come from historically low-income populations. All of them had to work to afford tuition, college related expenses and contribute to their households. Most of the study’s participants come from parents who have little to no formal education, which made the college navigation process a bit more difficult for them. Overall, the participants expressed that they did not receive proper guidance from most institutional agents, but fortunately for them they received encouragement from family and peers. Some of the informational shortcomings were met through peers who were in the shared their undocumented status. In addition to lack of guidance from institutional agents, the research suggested that institutional agents often lack cultural competency and sensibility to work with this segment of the student population.
Chapter 5

OVERVIEW, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this research study was to document the challenges of Latino undocumented scholars as well as the contributing factors that propelled them to continue their education. Some of the areas analyzed were: (a) institutional and systemic challenges; (b) financial support; (c) persistence factors and (d) overall college experience of each participant. The research was driven by the following questions in an attempt to examine the challenges faced by undocumented Latino students and Latino children of undocumented parents in their journey to pursue higher education, and the contributing factors that allowed them to persist:

1. What are some of the challenges undocumented students face in their pursuit of higher education?
2. What are some of the challenges children of undocumented parents face in their pursuit of higher education?
3. What initiatives/practices can be put in place to eliminate these challenges?

The literature reviewed for this study identifies common challenges faced by undocumented students in their pursuit of higher education. Some of these challenges include but are not limited to economic and social mobility, the lack of federal laws regarding tuition equity policies and financial assistance, psychological and accessibility challenges. Moreover, the literature also identified the protective factors that propelled undocumented students to defy the odds and take on the challenges
presented to them in order to earn a college degree. The main protective factor was family along with peers and mentors.

This research was conducted under the premise that this segment of the Latino community faces added challenges and barriers in their journey to earn post-secondary degrees; therefore, the researcher geared the study to analyze common challenges faced by this population as well as the protective factors that allowed members of this population to earn a college degree. This premise is supported by CRT and LatCrit. CRT states that the educational experiences of People of Color are marked by the oppressive structures and practices of institutions of higher learning (Perez Huber, 2010). Moreover, LatCrit points out that the Latino community faces added challenges based on issues related to immigration status, primary or home language, ethnicity and culture (Perez Huber, 2010). These two theories helped the researcher identified the themes and challenges stated by the study’s participants in their narratives.

**Discussion**

The results obtained through this research study suggest that the participants who pursued a college education in the Sacramento region shared certain challenges, personal characteristics, and experiences. Some of these challenges were lack of financial support and information. Some of the shared characteristics are persistence, drive and a positive outlook despite of the many challenges they have faced.

This research study establishes the need for more culturally competent and sensitive institutional agents. Although some Latino undocumented individuals,
including the ones in this study, manage to navigate the college educational process, there is a need for more competent institutional agents in order to make these individuals the norm rather than the exception (Enriquez, 2011; Erisman & Looney, 2007; Neinhusser et al., 2016; Perez et al., 2010). Some participants in this study said that the institutional agents that are supposed to help them often used terminology that made them feel unwelcome at their institutions. In order to address this issue, institutions of higher learning should implement mandatory cultural competency trainings with a lens on immigration for all of its staff and faculty. Culturally competent institutional agents may contribute to the promotion of retention of this minoritized group of students at institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, most participants reported receiving little to no information regarding their post high school options, and some even received mixed information regarding these choices, which made it difficult for them to transition from high school to college. Institutional agents from both high schools and intuitions of higher learning should receive an annual training on the different state and national immigration policies that affect students without lawful status in the United States in order to address the informational gap. These annual trainings may help institutional agents work with undocumented students in finding pathways that will allow undocumented students further their education after high school if they wish to do so.

It comes as no surprise that one of the biggest challenges reported by the study’s participants was the cost of education and the lack of financial assistance available to them. The Latino population in general comes from economically
marginalized families and the undocumented Latino population is a subsection with even less resources (Kaushal, 2008). This population’s low socioeconomic status makes college hard to afford especially if they do not have the information they need to cut down the cost of attendance. The situation is even worse for those students who attended or partially attended college before tuition equity policies, such as California’s AB 540, were put in place. A few participants in this study attended college their first years without the benefit of California’s AB 540 policy and had to pay higher amounts for tuition fees than their U.S.-born counterparts. Out-of-state tuition amount up to 140% more than resident fees (Gonzales, 2009); thus, making college unaffordable for undocumented Latino students who come from low-socioeconomic households. All participants at some point benefited from California’s AB 540 tuition equity policy, but at least half of them still had to pay for tuition fees and college related expenses out of packet since they did not qualify for state nor federal financial aid. Even for undocumented Latino students who starting in 2011 benefited from California’s state financial aid, commonly known as Cal-Grants, the expenses associated with attending college were still a constant concern since Cal-Grants only cover the cost of tuition and fees. Institutional agents should actively advocate to adopt and/or keep tuition equity policies as well as policies that allow undocumented students to access state/federal financial aid. Also, institutional agents should be familiar with scholarships that are open to students regardless of their immigration status. Despite the overwhelming challenges faced by the study’s
participants, all but one were able to defy the odds and persist in their pursuit of higher education.

The results of this research study found that participants counted with encouragement, support and guidance from different sources. Despite the fact that most of the participants’ parents have limited to no formal education, the study found that parents and family members were the primary source of moral and financial support, and encouragement that these students received in their pursuit of higher education. Despite their low educational attainment, Latino parents are very supportive of their children’s educational aspirations and dreams (Enriquez, 2011). Therefore, institutional agents at both the k-12 and higher education systems should implement programs to empower families with the information they need to effectively support their children in their educational journey to success. In addition to the encouragement and support provided by parents, undocumented students find the strength to persist in higher education by drawing on the sacrifices and hardships their parents have endured to provide them with a better future (Perez et al., 2010). This was shared by some participants who also reported finding the strength to continue their pursuit of higher education by reflecting on the sacrifices their parents have made and continue to make in order to provide them with the opportunity of a better future. Some of the study’s participants also mentioned that they want to earn a college degree so as to help their families economically. Furthermore, this faction of the population draws the motivation to persist from fellow peers enduring the same challenges and from some professors who understand their situation and the struggles
they face (Perez et al, 2010). Participants reported finding information, advice and motivation from other students who shared their struggles or simply sympathized with their situation. In order to keep this type of support system for all students, not only undocumented students, institutions of higher learning should explore the possibility of implementing peer-to-peer support programs for all of their freshmen. The participants in this study mentioned the positive impact peer mentoring had in their lives and it might be worth exploring the impact of implementing a systematic peer-to-peer mentoring program.

Limitations

It would of have been of great benefit to gather a larger number of participants for both the online survey and the interview portion of the study. This limitation prevented the researcher from evaluating differences in patterns from undocumented students and legal residents born to undocumented parents. Furthermore, the researcher feels that the current tense atmosphere in the nation due to the 2016 presidential election, the lack of sensitivity and knowledge on this population by the researcher’s institutional agents limited the researcher’s access to possible study participants, and it might also have prevented participants from fully expressing themselves and sharing more information with the researcher. The researcher encountered this limitation in spite of being a college student and having a rapport with the local undocumented population.

Many undocumented youth do not have the information needed to access higher education, and this also limited the pool of participants for this study. In
addition, due to the stigma associated with their undocumented status this is a hidden population that is hard to access. Moreover, in retrospect the researcher feels that he should have limited the number of multiple-choice questions and increased the number of open-ended question in order to get a more in-depth picture of the challenges faced by this population and the protective factors that propelled them to persist in their effort to earn a college degree.

**Recommendations**

It is important to examine the challenges face by undocumented Latino students and the shared challenges of legal residents born to Latino undocumented parents as they pursue higher education; however, it is also important to study the challenges that prevented other Latino undocumented youth from accessing higher education in the first place. Furthermore, there is a need for in-depth study of the protective and risk factors that this population faces as they attempt to further their education. Although some of this study’s participants were graduate students, the researcher did not come across many undocumented scholars who were pursuing or had already earned a graduate degree. Another area that needs further study is the personal and professional outcomes of both—students who were able to defy the odds and earn a college degree and those who unfortunately could not overcome the challenges and barriers associated with their undocumented status.

**Summary**

This research identified some of the shared challenges undocumented scholars face in their pursuit of higher education as well as the protective factors that helped
this population persist in higher education despite the multiple forms of oppression they encounter. The research described how the current structures and practices of the U.S. higher education system oppress this population as well as how class and culture play key roles in the experiences of this minoritized group. The study’s participants shared the struggles, challenges, and motivation factor that propel them to pursue a college degree despite the odds. The findings in this study highlight the need to further study the challenges this population faces in their pursuit of higher education and the need to address those challenges so as to ensure the academic and professional success of the undocumented Latino population.
APPENDIX A

Interview Questions
APPENDIX A

1. Did your immigration status have any influence on your college of attendance? ¿Tiene/tuvo su estatus migratorio alguna influencia en su decisión de donde asistir a la universidad?

2. Did/Does your immigration status have any influence on the number of classes you take per term (quarter/semester)? If so, how did/does it influence this decision? ¿Tiene/tuvo su estatus migratorio alguna influencia en el numero de clases que toma por termino (trimestre/semestre)?

3. Did/Does your immigration status have any influence on the major you chose? If so, how did/does it influence this decision? ¿Tiene/tuvo su estatus migratorio alguna influencia en la carrera que eligió?

4. Is there any positive aspect to your immigration status? ¿Hay algún aspecto positivo a su estatus migratorio?

5. Do you feel you are at a disadvantage when it comes to academic achievement and potential opportunities based on your immigration status? ¿Siente que usted tiene una desventaja de logro académico o potencial de oportunidades basado en su estatus migratorio?

6. What should institutions of higher learning do to ensure the academic success (retention) of Latino undocumented scholars? ¿Qué deberían hacer las instituciones de educación superior para asegurar el éxito académico (retención) de los estudiantes Latinos que son indocumentados?

7. How would your academic options and performance be different if you’re a lawful resident of the United States? ¿Cómo serian sus opciones y desempeño académico diferentes si usted fuese un residente legal de los Estados Unidos?

8. Is there anything else you would like to contribute to this discussion? ¿Hay algo más que usted quisiera aportar a esta discusión?
APPENDIX B

Recruiting Email
APPENDIX B

Re: Research Study on Undocumented Students/Students from mixed-status families

Greetings,

My name is Elden O. Hernandez and I am a graduate students in the college of Education at Sacramento State. I am contacting you because I need your help in distributing a link to myanonymous online survey to AB540/DACA/Undocumented Scholars.

I would like to documented these scholars’ experiences and challenges as AB540/DACA/undocumented scholars in their pursuit of higher education. I ask that you please forward this e-mail though your listserves. Please keep in mind that this is a very sensitive matter and I am not asking you to “out” anyone by sending me names. I would prefer that they self-identify and opt to participate on the study by visiting the following link https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Undochallenges or by getting in contact with me. My e-mail address is Oswaldo-Hernandez@scusd.edu or at 916-764-XXXX.

I hope that you please share this e-mail/survey link thorough your listserves and/or social media as this is a very important story to tell about a vey valuable student population that needs to be told and learned from.

All information will always remain confidential and secure. Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,

Elden O. Hernandez
APPENDIX C

Consent Form – Interview
APPENDIX C  
(Consent form—Interview)  

Informed Consent for Participation  
CSUS: Sacramento Thesis Research Study  

My name is Elden O. Hernandez and I am a current graduate student of the Master of Arts in Education at California State University, Sacramento. You are being asked to participate in a study, which will be identifying and analyzing the (perceived) challenges faced by undocumented students and/or students of undocumented parents/legal guardians. Your participation involves engaging in a guided discussion regarding your struggles as an undocumented individual, which will require approximately 45 minutes of your time.  

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw consent at any time and without any penalties. Although none of the questions were designed to cause you any form of discomfort, if you do experience discomfort and feel like you need to talk to someone please get in contact with The Well’s Counseling Center at 916-278-6461 or the Mental Health Crisis Intervention Hotline at 1-888-881-4881. You may decline to answer any of the questions; however, your active participation in the group’s discussion will be most helpful in completing this study. You may withdraw consent by informing the researcher of your decision; any input provided by you will not be used and it will be permanently deleted. Names will not be collected to protect your identity and the answers collected will be used solely for the purpose of this study. However, given the nature of focus groups, the researcher cannot ensure the confidentiality of the group’s members since everyone in the room will be listening to your contributions and, even though it is unlikely, they may divulge any of the information discussed in the group. By participating in this focus group, you give the researcher permission to audio record your participation in this study. Audio files will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher within a week and deleted thereafter. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.  

The results of this study will be available after November 15, 2016. If you have any questions please contact:  

Elden O. Hernandez  
Researcher  
Email: Oswaldo-Hernandez@scusd.edu  
Phone: (916) 764-XXXX  

Mimi Coughlin, Ph.D.  
Thesis Adviser  
coughlin@csus.edu  
(916) 278-4080  

Thank you for your participation and time. By participating in the study you indicate that you have read and understand the information provided above.
APPENDIX D

Survey
The information you provide on this survey is confidential. Individual responses shall never be traced back to any individual. Your completing this survey and returning it constitutes evidence of your consent to participate in this study.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge/ability. You may choose to not answer any of the questions or withdraw from this survey at any point.

1. What is your country of origin?

2. How old are you?
   - [ ] 18-19 years old
   - [ ] 20-24 years old
   - [ ] 25-29 years old
   - [ ] 30-34 years old
   - [ ] 35+ years old
   - [ ] Decline to State

3. What is your gender?
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female
   - [ ] Decline to State

4. How long have you been living in the United States?
   - [ ] <1 year
   - [ ] 1-5 years
   - [ ] 6-10 years
   - [ ] 11-15 years
   - [ ] 16+ years

5. Do you have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)? If so, has it impacted your education in any way?

6. What is your mother’s highest level of education?
   - [ ] No schooling completed
   - [ ] > 8 grade
   - [ ] Some high school
   - [ ] High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
   - [ ] Some college but no degree
   - [ ] Trade/Technical/Vocational training
   - [ ] Associate degree
   - [ ] Bachelor’s degree
   - [ ] Master’s degree
   - [ ] Doctorate/Professional degree
   - [ ] Decline to state

7. What is your father’s highest level of education?
   - [ ] No schooling completed
   - [ ] > 8 grade
   - [ ] Some high school
   - [ ] High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
   - [ ] Some college but no degree
   - [ ] Trade/Technical/Vocational training
   - [ ] Associate degree
   - [ ] Bachelor’s degree
   - [ ] Master’s degree
   - [ ] Doctorate/Professional degree
   - [ ] Decline to state

8. Is any of your parents a U.S. Citizen or a permanent resident of the United States?
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Yes, my father
   - [ ] Yes, my mother
   - [ ] Both
   - [ ] Decline to state

9. What is your major?
10. Please indicate your highest level of education you enrolled for:
   - [ ] Undergraduate (Community College)
   - [ ] Undergraduate (State University)
   - [ ] Undergraduate (University of California)
   - [ ] Graduate/Professional (State University)
   - [ ] Graduate/Professional (University of California)
   - [ ] Other: ___________________________ [ ] Decline to state

11. Please indicate your highest level of education completed:
   - [ ] Undergraduate (Community College)
   - [ ] Undergraduate (State University)
   - [ ] Undergraduate (University of California)
   - [ ] Graduate/Professional (State University)
   - [ ] Graduate/Professional (University of California)
   - [ ] Other: ___________________________ [ ] Decline to state

12. What is/was your cumulative GPA?
   - [ ] >2.0
   - [ ] 2.0-2.49
   - [ ] 2.5-2.99
   - [ ] 3.0-3.49
   - [ ] 3.5+
   - [ ] Decline to state

13. What is your current occupation?

14. What is/was your biggest challenge in your pursuit of higher education?

15. Have you experienced discrimination on-campus based on your legal status or your parents’ legal status? If so, would you please describe the incidence(s).

16. Do/did you have to work while attending college? If so, do you feel this affected your performance in college? On average, how many hours do/did you have to work?

17. Do/did you have any responsibilities in your household while attending college? If so, would you please describe them.

18. Do/did you feel that academic/career counselors are/were able to help/guide you during your college career? Please explain.

19. Were any resources (e.g. financial, academic, etc.) offered to you while in college?

20. How do/did you pay for college tuition and college related expenses (E.g. parents support you financially, work, financial aid/scholarships, any combination of these)?

21. Do/did your parents place(d) a high importance in higher education? Please explain.
22. What encouraged you, motivated your decision to go to college?

23. If you’re still in college, how was the California Dream Act (financial help) helped you keep pursuing college?

24. What advice, if any, would you give to a student enrolling in college?

25. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group to further explore some of the challenges faced by you and other undocumented scholars? If so, please contact the researcher by phone at 916-764-XXXX or by e-mail at Oswaldo-hernandez@scusd.edu.
SURVEY (Spanish)

La información que proporcione en este cuestionario es confidencial. Respuestas individuales no se pueden rastrear a ningún individuo. El completar y regresar este cuestionario constituye evidencia de su consentimiento a participar en este estudio.

Por favor responda las siguientes preguntas a lo mejor de su conocimiento/habilidad. Usted puede elegir no responder a cualquiera de las preguntas o abandonar el cuestionario a cualquier punto.

1. ¿Cuál es su país de origen?

2. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
   - [ ] 18-19 años
   - [ ] 20-24 años
   - [ ] 25-29 años
   - [ ] 30-34 años
   - [ ] 35+ años
   - [ ] No deseo contestar

3. ¿Cuál es su género?
   - [ ] Masculino
   - [ ] Femenino
   - [ ] No deseo contestar

4. ¿Cuántos años lleva viviendo en los Estados Unidos?
   - [ ] <1 año
   - [ ] 1-5 años
   - [ ] 6-10 años
   - [ ] 11-15 años
   - [ ] 16+ años

5. ¿Tiene usted Acción Diferida (DACA)? Si sí, ¿Ha esta impactado su educación de algún modo?

6. ¿Cuál es el nivel más alto de educación de su madre?
   - [ ] No asistió a la escuela
   - [ ] > 8 grado
   - [ ] Algo de preparatoria
   - [ ] Preparatoria o equivalente (ej., GED)
   - [ ] Estudios universitarios sin titulación
   - [ ] Entrenamiento vocacional/técnico
   - [ ] Carrera corta (Associate Degree)
   - [ ] Licenciatura
   - [ ] Maestría
   - [ ] Doctorado/Título Profesional
   - [ ] No deseo contestar

7. ¿Cuál es el nivel más alto de educación de su padre?
   - [ ] No asistió a la escuela
   - [ ] > 8 grado
   - [ ] Algo de preparatoria
   - [ ] Preparatoria o equivalente (ej., GED)
   - [ ] Estudios universitarios sin titulación
   - [ ] Entrenamiento vocacional/técnico
   - [ ] Carrera corta (Associate Degree)
   - [ ] Licenciatura
   - [ ] Maestría
   - [ ] Doctorado/Título Profesional
   - [ ] No deseo contestar

8. ¿Es alguno de sus padres residente permanente o ciudadano de los Estados Unidos?
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Sí, mi padre
   - [ ] Sí, mi madre
   - [ ] Ambos
   - [ ] No deseo contestar

9. ¿Cuál es su área de estudio (major)?
10. Por favor marque el nivel más alto de educación al cual se inscribió:

☐ Nivel licenciatura (Colegio comunitario) ☐ Nivel licenciatura (Universidad estatal)
☐ Nivel licenciatura (Universidad de California)
☐ Maestría/Título profesional (Universidad estatal)
☐ Maestría/Título profesional (Universidad de California)
Otro: ______________________  ☐ No deseo contestar

11. Por favor marque el nivel más alto de educación completado:

☐ Nivel licenciatura (Colegio comunitario) ☐ Nivel licenciatura (Universidad estatal)
☐ Nivel licenciatura (Universidad de California)
☐ Maestría/Título profesional (Universidad estatal) ☐ Maestría/Título profesional (Universidad de California)
Otro: ______________________  ☐ No deseo contestar

12. ¿Cuál es/fue su promedio de calificaciones?

☐ >2.0 ☐ 2.0-2.49 ☐ 2.5-2.99 ☐ 3.0-3.49 ☐ 3.5+ ☐ No deseo contestar

13. ¿Cuál es su profesión actual?

14. ¿Cuál es/fue su reto más grande en su camino a una educación superior?

15. ¿Ha experimentado discriminación en base a su estatus legal o el de sus padres? Si sí, por favor describa los incidentes.

16. ¿Tiene/tuvo que trabajar durante su tiempo en la universidad? Si sí, ¿Siente que esto afecta/afecto su desempeño en la escuela? En promedio, ¿Cuántas horas tiene/tuvo que trabajar?

17. ¿Tiene/tuvo alguna responsabilidad en su hogar mientras asiste/asistía a la universidad? Si sí, por favor describálas.

18. ¿Siente que los consejeros académicos/de carreras lo pueden/pudieron ayudar/guiar durante su carrera en la universidad? Por favor explique.

19. ¿Le son/fueron ofrecidos recursos (ej., ayuda financiera/académica) durante su carrera en la universidad?

20. ¿Cómo paga/pagó su colegiatura y gastos relacionados con la universidad (Ej. Sus padres le apoyaron financieramente, trabajo, ayuda financiera/becas, alguna combinación de estas)?
21. ¿Ponen/pusieron sus padres una gran importancia en la educación superior? Por favor explique.

22. ¿Qué lo animó, motivó a asistir a la universidad?

23. Si sigue en la universidad, ¿Cómo le ha ayudado el acta del sueño de California (ayuda financiera) a continuar sus estudios?

24. ¿Qué consejo, si alguno, le daría a un estudiante indocumentado que se inscribirá a la universidad?

25. ¿Estaría usted de acuerdo en participar en un grupo de enfoque para explorar más a fondo los retos que usted y otros estudiantes indocumentados enfrentan? Si sí, por favor comuníquese con el investigador llamando al 916-764-XXXX o por correo electrónico a Oswaldo-Hernandez@scusd.edu.
APPENDIX E

Consent Form – Initial Survey
Appendix E
(Consent form—Initial Survey)

Informed Consent for Participation
CSUS: Sacramento Thesis Research Study

My name is Elden O. Hernandez and I am a current graduate student of the Master of Arts in Education at California State University, Sacramento. You are being asked to participate in a study, which will be identifying and analyzing the (perceived) challenges faced by undocumented students and/or students of undocumented parents/legal guardians. Your participation involves filling out the attached questionnaire, which will require approximately 20-30 minutes of your time.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw consent at any time and without any penalties. Although none of the questions were designed to cause you any form of discomfort, if you do experience discomfort and feel like you need to talk to someone please get in contact with The Well’s Counseling Center at 916-278-6461 or the Mental Health Crisis Intervention Hotline at 1-888-881-4881. You may decline to answer any of the questions; however, full and complete surveys will be most helpful in completing this study. You may withdraw consent by exiting this survey; data from partially completed surveys will not be used and it will be permanently deleted; however, once a completed survey is submitted the researcher cannot remove the de-identified data and he will use the data collected for the purposes of this study. Names will not be collected to protect your identity and the answers collected will be used solely for the purpose of this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento, (916) 278-5674, or email irb@csus.edu.

The results of this study will be available after November 15, 2016. If you have any questions please contact:

Elden O. Hernandez
Researcher
Email: Oswaldo-Hernandez@scusd.edu
Phone: (916) 764-XXXX

Mimi Coughlin, Ph.D.
Thesis adviser
Email: coughlin@csus.edu
Phone: (916) 278-4080

Thank you for your participation and time. By participating in the study you indicate that you have read and understand the information provided above.
REFERENCES


Perez Huber, Lindsay. (2010). Using Latina/o Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) and racist nativism to explore intersectionality in the educational experiences of


